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November 7, 2016

To: Supervisor Hilda L. Solis, Chair
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From: Philip L. Browning
Director

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**HAMBURGER HOME DBA AVIVA FAMILY AND CHILDREN SERVICES FOSTER
FAMILY AGENCY QUALITY ASSURANCE REVIEW**

The Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) Out-of-Home Care Management Division (OHCMD) conducted a Quality Assurance Review (QAR) of the Hamburger Home dba Aviva Family and Children Services Foster Family Agency (the FFA) in June 2016. The FFA has one office located in the Third Supervisorial District and provides services to the County of Los Angeles DCFS placed children and Probation youth. According to the FFA's Program Statement, its stated purpose is, "to provide specialized, supportive foster care homes in Los Angeles County, and thereby maximize the children's potential for optimal growth and development."

The QAR looked at the status of the placed children's safety, permanency, and well-being during the most recent 30 days and the FFA's practices and services over the most recent 90 days. The FFA scored at or above the minimum acceptable score in all 9 of the focus areas: Safety, Permanency, Placement Stability, Visitation, Engagement, Service Needs, Assessment & Linkages, Teamwork, and Tracking & Adjustment.

In July 2016, the OHCMD Quality Assurance Reviewer met with the FFA to discuss the results of the QAR. The FFA did not require a Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) as the FFA scored at or above the minimum acceptable score in all 9 focus areas of the QAR.

Each Supervisor
November 7, 2016
Page 2

If you have any questions, your staff may contact me or Aldo Marin, Board Relations Manager at (213) 351-5530.

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Attachments

c: Sachi A. Hamai, Chief Executive Officer
John Naimo, Auditor-Controller
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**HAMBURGER HOME DBA AVIVA FAMILY AND CHILDREN SERVICES
FOSTER FAMILY AGENCY
QUALITY ASSURANCE REVIEW (QAR)
FISCAL YEAR 2015-2016**

SCOPE OF REVIEW

The Out-of-Home Care Management Division (OHCMD) conducted a Quality Assurance Review (QAR) of the Hamburger Home dba Aviva Family and Children Services Foster Family Agency (the FFA) in June 2016. The purpose of the QAR is to assess the FFA's service delivery and to ensure that the FFA is providing children with quality care and services in a safe environment, which includes physical care, social and emotional support, education and workforce readiness, and other services to protect and enhance their growth and development.

The QAR is an in-depth case review and interview process designed to assess how children and their families are benefiting from services received and how well the services are working. The QAR utilizes a six-point rating scale as a *yardstick* for measuring the situation observed in specific focus areas. The QAR assessed the following focus areas:

Status Indicators:

- Safety
- Permanency
- Placement Stability
- Visitation

Practice Indicators:

- Engagement
- Service Needs
- Assessment & Linkages
- Teamwork
- Tracking & Adjustment

For Status Indicators, the QAR focuses on the focus child's functioning during the most recent 30-day period; and for Practice Indicators, the QAR focuses on the FFA's service delivery during the most recent 90-day period.

For the purpose of this QAR, interviews were conducted with three focus children, three Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) Children's Social Workers (CSWs), three FFA staff members, and three certified foster parents.

At the time of the QAR, the FFA supervised 52 DCFS placed children in 31 certified foster homes. The FFA had no Probation youth placed at the time of this QAR. The focus children's average number of placements was five, their overall average length of placement was 19 months and their average age was 11. The focus children were randomly selected. None of the focus children were included as part of the sample for the Contract Administration Division's (CAD's) 2015-2016 Contract Compliance Review.

QAR SCORING

The FFA received a score for each focus area based on information gathered from on-site visits, agency file reviews, DCFS court reports and updated case plans, and interviews with the FFA staff, DCFS CSWs, service providers, and the focus children. The minimum acceptable score is 6 in the area of Safety and 5 in all remaining areas.

Focus Area	Minimum Acceptable Score	FFA QAR Score	FFA QAR Rating
Safety - The degree to which the FFA staff and certified foster parents ensure that the focus children are free of abuse, neglect and exploitation by others in his/her placement and other settings.	6	6 - Optimal Safety Status	The focus children have a highly safe living situation with fully reliable and competent caregivers and are protected well at all times. Protective strategies are fully operative and dependable.
Permanency - The degree to which the focus children are living with certified foster parents, who are likely to remain in this role until the focus children reach adulthood, or the focus children are in the process of returning home or transitioning to a permanent home and the focus children, the FFA staff, certified foster parents, DCFS CSWs and if applicable, Department of Probation Officers (DPOs) support the plan.	5	5 - Good Status	The focus children have substantial permanence. The focus children live in a family setting that the focus children, FFA staff, caregivers and team members have confidence will endure lifelong.

HAMBURGER HOME DBA AVIVA FAMILY AND CHILDREN SERVICES FOSTER FAMILY
 AGENCY QUALITY ASSURANCE REVIEW
 PAGE 3

Focus Area	Minimum Acceptable Score	FFA QAR Score	FFA QAR Rating
Placement Stability - The degree to which the FFA staff and certified foster parents ensure that the focus children's daily living, learning and work arrangements are stable and free from risk of disruptions. Known risks are being managed to achieve stability and reduce the probability of future disruptions.	5	5 - Good Stability	The focus children have substantial stability in placement and school settings with only planned changes and no more than one disruption in either setting over the past 30 days.
Visitation - The degree to which the FFA staff and certified foster parents support maintaining important connections with significant family members/Non-Related Extended Family Members (NREFMs) through appropriate visitation and other means.	5	5 - Substantially Acceptable Maintenance of Visitation & Connections	Generally effective family connections are being sought for all significant family members/NREFMs through appropriate visits and other connecting strategies. All appropriate family members/NREFMs have regular visits.
Engagement - The degree to which the FFA staff and certified foster parents working with the focus children, their family members/NREFMs and other team members for the purpose of building a genuine, trusting and collaborative working relationship with the ability to concentrate on the focus children's strengths and needs.	5	5 - Good Engagement Efforts	To a strong degree, a rapport has been developed, such that the FFA staff, DCFS CSWs, DPOs (if applicable), caregivers and the focus children feel heard and respected. Reports indicate that good, consistent efforts are being used.

HAMBURGER HOME DBA AVIVA FAMILY AND CHILDREN SERVICES FOSTER FAMILY
 AGENCY QUALITY ASSURANCE REVIEW
 PAGE 4

Focus Area	Minimum Acceptable Score	FFA QAR Score	FFA QAR Rating
Service Needs - The degree to which the FFA staff and certified foster parents involved with the focus children work toward ensuring the focus children's needs are met and identified services are being implemented and supported and are specifically tailored to meet the focus children's unique needs.	5	6 - Optimal Supports and Services	An excellent array of supports and services fully matches intervention strategies identified in the focus children's case plans. The services are substantially helping the focus children make progress toward planned outcomes.
Assessment & Linkages - The degree to which the FFA staff and certified foster parents involved with the focus children and their family members/NREFMs understand the focus children's strengths, needs, preferences and underlying needs and services provided are regularly assessed to ensure progress is being made toward case plan goals.	5	6 - Optimal Assessment and Understanding	The focus children's functioning and support systems are comprehensively understood. Knowledge necessary to understand the focus children's strengths, needs and preferences is continuously updated.
Teamwork - The degree to which the "right people" for the focus children and their family members/NREFMs, have formed a working team that meets, talks and/or makes plans together.	5	5 - Good Teamwork	The team contains most of the important supporters and decision-makers in the focus children's lives, including informal supports. The team has formed a good, dependable working system that meets, talks and/or plans together.

HAMBURGER HOME DBA AVIVA FAMILY AND CHILDREN SERVICES FOSTER FAMILY
 AGENCY QUALITY ASSURANCE REVIEW
 PAGE 5

Focus Area	Minimum Acceptable Score	FFA QAR Score	FFA QAR Rating
Tracking & Adjustment - The degree to which the FFA staff and certified foster parents involved with the focus children and their family members/NREFMs are carefully tracking the progress that the focus children are making, changing family circumstances, attainment of goals and planned outcomes.	5	6 - Optimal Tracking and Adjustment Process	Intervention strategies, supports and services being provided to the focus children are highly responsive and appropriate to changing conditions. Continuous monitoring, tracking and communication of the focus children's status is occurring.

The OHCMD conducted the last QAR of the FFA in February 2015, and noted that the FFA scored at or above the minimum acceptable score in all 9 focus areas of the QAR. In May 2015, the Quality Assurance Reviewer met with the FFA to discuss the results of the QAR and to provide the FFA with technical support to address methods for maintaining and/or improving their level of service. Based on the information below, it appears that the FFA maintained an acceptable level of service in all 9 focus areas of their 2015-2016 QAR.

STATUS INDICATORS
(Measured over last 30 days)

Status Indicators	Safety	Permanency	Placement Stability	Visitation
2014-2015 Scores	6	5	5	6
2015-2016 Scores	6	5	5	5

In the area of Safety, the FFA continued to score at the optimal level. The FFA staff provides a written proactive safety plan to each certified foster parent that contains a list of the FFA's staff that is available to provide support 24 hours a day. The proactive safety plan is child specific and contains the history of calls made regarding each placed child and the type of support provided. The certified foster parents are made aware of the placed child's behavioral triggers based on their history at the time of placement and the FFA Social Workers give the certified foster parents recommendations to address their needs. Each placed child's proactive safety plan is updated monthly. The focus children stated they felt safe in their respective certified foster home. The first focus child stated, "Mom and Dad (certified foster parents) are here and they keep me safe." The second focus child stated his certified foster parents are always with him and "they lock the doors every night." The third focus child stated that her certified foster parent is always there and that "she is protective". The certified foster parents stated that the FFA staff provides them with ongoing trainings,

which includes the FFA's protocols and procedures and how to update the proactive safety plans. The certified foster parents stated that they monitor the placed children as they play outside their homes, talk to the focus children, and encourage them to discuss their needs and safety concerns with them. One certified foster parent stated, "We are trained to report all safety concerns to the FFA staff for assistance." There have been no safety concerns over the last 30 days in the certified foster homes of the three focus children. The DCFS CSWs reported they had no safety concerns with the certified foster homes and that the FFA staff communicates with them quickly and consistently shares information regarding the focus children with them.

In the area of Permanency, the FFA continued to provide very good permanence for the focus children. All three focus children have permanency plans of Family Reunification with family members/NREFMs. The FFA Social Workers stated that they assist the certified foster parents and placed children at the start of each placement to focus and work on any behaviors that may delay reunification with their family members/NREFMs. The certified foster parents for the focus children each stated that they work to assure the focus children can remain placed in their homes until they are able to reunify with their family members/NREFMs. All three of the certified foster parents are supportive of the case plan goals of the focus children. The first and third focus children have lived in their certified foster homes for an average of two years and have bonded with their certified foster parents. The second focus child has been placed with the FFA for four months and has bonded with his certified foster parents. The first focus child refers to his certified foster parents as "mom and dad." The second focus child stated that his certified foster parents are the ones he shares his concerns with. The third focus child stated that he feels safe and comfortable in his certified foster home. The FFA staff supports the focus children's permanency through therapy and other services identified in their case plans. The focus children have established positive relationships with key adult supporters such as their certified foster parents, FFA staff, and FFA therapists. The FFA staff maintains constant communication with the DCFS CSWs regarding the focus children's permanency goals.

In the area of Placement Stability, the FFA continued to provide good placement stability for the focus children. None of the focus children have experienced placement or school disruptions while placed at the FFA. The FFA's Therapeutic Behavioral Services program is available to provide added support to the FFA Social Worker when the placed children and certified foster parents feel the placement is in jeopardy of disruption. The three certified foster parents are willing and able to continue providing care for the focus children until they are able to reunify with their biological parents or until they emancipate and become independent.

In the area of Visitation, the FFA has ensured that all court ordered visitation is provided to the focus children. The focus children stated that they enjoy their visits with their family members/NREFMs. The FFA Social Workers stated that they work with the DCFS CSWs, family members/NREFMs, and certified foster parents to coordinate the visits and telephone communication. The FFA staff stated that the certified foster parents provide transportation to and from visits and will monitor the visits when needed. The first focus child has unmonitored weekend visits and is transported by the certified foster parents every weekend.

HAMBURGER HOME DBA AVIVA FAMILY AND CHILDREN SERVICES FOSTER FAMILY
AGENCY QUALITY ASSURANCE REVIEW
PAGE 7

The second and third focus children have weekly visits that are monitored by the certified foster parents. The certified foster parents stated that they call the family members/NREFMs in advance to arrange the weekly visits so that everyone's schedule is accommodated to ensure that the visits occur as scheduled. This practice ensures that the visits are not cancelled or rescheduled.

PRACTICE INDICATORS
(Measured over last 90 days)

Practice Indicators	Engagement	Service Needs	Assessment & Linkages	Teamwork	Tracking & Adjustment
2014-2015 Scores	5	6	6	5	6
2015-2016 Scores	5	6	6	5	6

In the area of Engagement, the FFA continues to make good efforts to engage the focus children, certified foster parents, DCFS CSWs, and key people in decisions that are being made for the focus children. The FFA Social Workers meets with the certified foster parents and placed children weekly to discuss any concerns they may have. The certified foster parents stated that the FFA Social Workers always responds promptly to any concerns they have. The focus children stated that they feel heard and respected by the FFA Social Workers and their certified foster parents. The DCFS CSWs stated that the FFA Social Workers keep them informed of the focus children's progress via weekly e-mails and telephone calls. The first and third focus children reported that they have a good relationship with their certified foster parents, FFA Social Workers, and DCFS CSWs. The second focus child stated he has a new DCFS CSW that was just assigned to his case last month, but indicated that he has a good relationship with his certified foster parents and FFA Social Worker.

In the area of Service Needs, the FFA continued to score at the optimal level. The first focus child is receiving weekly individual counseling and tutoring services. The second and third focus children are receiving weekly individual counseling services. The FFA's Vice President of Programs and Services stated that the FFA's goal is to provide safe and supportive homes for all placed children. The FFA received the Human Rights Campaign seal from the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender community. The seal is awarded to service organizations that provide services and support to clients irrespective of their race, ethnicity, culture, or gender. The FFA's Vice President of Programs and Services Director also reported that the FFA has implemented a program entitled Line of Sight (LOS). The LOS is a program that develops, organizes, and implements a framework of performance indicators in order to provide reliable, timely, and accurate information regarding the services that are being provided. The LOS program assists the FFA staff in ensuring that the services being provided to the focus children remain appropriate. The FFA's mental health and social

HAMBURGER HOME DBA AVIVA FAMILY AND CHILDREN SERVICES FOSTER FAMILY
AGENCY QUALITY ASSURANCE REVIEW
PAGE 8

service programs, which are provided to the focus children, are nationally accredited by the Council on Accreditation (COA).

In addition, the FFA also provides Foster Family and Adoption Services, Residential Treatment Services, Wraparound Services, and Intensive Treatment Foster Care (ITFC) services. Based on these programs, the FFA continues to offer an excellent array of services to the focus children. Intervention strategies identified in the case plans and Needs and Services Plans (NSPs) match the services that are being provided to the focus children. For example, the third focus child was receiving the FFA's ITFC services when she was originally placed at the FFA. The FFA was able to seamlessly move the focus child into a less restrictive placement within the FFA as her disruptive behaviors decreased.

In the area of Assessment & Linkages, the FFA continued to score at the optimal level. The certified foster parents stated that they assess the focus children by observing their behaviors in the home and will provide their input to their respective FFA Social Workers for them to consider when assessing for needed services for the focus children. The FFA stated their assessments are conducted monthly based on the data they compile from the various programs that the focus children participate in. In addition, they receive educational feedback from the school that the focus children attend. The FFA's Performance Outcome Measure Team collects and analyzes their data monthly from each program and will share the results with the focus children, certified foster parents, and DCFS CSWs. The data is also distributed to each program, department, and line staff monthly in order to assist them in determining what is working in their programs as well as the progress of the placed children within these programs. Their information is used to secure the services identified or make adjustments in the placed children's case plan goals. The certified foster parents stated that they meet with the FFA Social Workers each month and sometimes weekly to discuss the services being provided to the focus children as well as their progress.

In the area of Teamwork, the FFA Director of Foster Care stated that their FFA Social Workers attend school meetings, Child and Family Team meetings, and other meetings as often as needed to ensure the well-being of the placed children. She stated, "we believe in teaming, engagement, stability and safety of our children and families". The team members for the focus children are able to use the LOS programming data to develop effective plans for each focus child. The FFA Social Workers stated that they provide updates to the DCFS CSWs monthly by e-mail and/or telephone when they are unable to attend team meetings. The certified foster parents stated that they meet monthly with their FFA Social Workers and that they feel heard and respected. The focus children reported that they feel that the FFA Social Workers and DCFS CSWs listen to them, follow up on their input, and includes their requests in the case plans.

In the area of Tracking & Adjustment, the FFA continued to score at the optimal level. The FFA uses their LOS program to track the progress of the placed children along with the quarterly reports. Each month the FFA's departments and programs identify a series of key performance indicators (KPI's) upon which data is gathered. Based on the data gathered, adjustments to the provision of services are made, if needed.

NEXT STEPS TO SUSTAIN SUCCESS AND OVERCOME CURRENT CHALLENGES

In August 2016, the OHCMD provided the FFA with technical support related to the CAD's 2015-2016 Contract Compliance Review finding in the area of Personal Needs/Survival and Economic Well-Being. Technical support was provided on how the FFA can ensure that all placed children receive their full weekly allowance.

In July 2016, the Quality Assurance Reviewer met with the FFA to discuss the results of the QAR and to provide the FFA with technical support addressing methods on maintaining and/or improving their current level of care. The FFA scored at or above the minimum acceptable score in all 9 focus areas of the QAR; therefore the FFA did not require a Quality Improvement Plan (QIP). The OHCMD Quality Assurance staff will continue to provide ongoing technical support, training, and consultation to assist the FFA, as needed.